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The Community Pulpit

**Can China Save the West?**  
**A Study in Comparative Civilizations**

By

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Series 1922-1923 — No. XVIII

Price, 10 Cents

Published by

**The Community Church**

Park Avenue and 34th Street  
New York City

## NOTICE

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The Community Pulpit, by tradition and practice, is a free platform, dedicated to the ideal of truth. Its addresses in both their spoken and written form, are the utterances of the preacher, who accepts for them exclusive responsibility.

## CAN CHINA SAVE THE WEST?

### A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE CIVILIZATIONS



TO ALL who look beneath the surface of our troubled life today the most significant thing that is taking place is the gradual re-valuation of values on the part of thoughtful minds everywhere. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of comparative civilizations, where the contrast is being drawn between the ideals and ends of Western civilization and those of the older civilizations of the world. In this connection I would like to call attention to two very remarkable articles appearing in the February and March numbers of *The Century Magazine* by Nathaniel Peffer, an American, who has spent many years in the Far East. These articles deal with "The Revolt Against Civilization," but it is the author's contention that this present world-wide revolt is not so much a revolt of non-whites against the whites,—a racial revolt, as many claim,—as it is a revolt against the fundamental philosophy upon which the white man has built his civilization, a revolt in which the white man himself is beginning to take part.

It is in this field of comparative civilizations that a most interesting thing has recently taken place. Two of the most distinguished and outstanding philosophers of the Western world have, in the last few years, visited China,—John Dewey of America and Bertrand Russell of England. As philosophers, they are known not for their in-

terest in ancient problems or their absorption in questions of metaphysics, but because of their devotion to the problems of today's life, and chiefly, to the understanding and direction of those factors and forces which have to do with the moral and social control of man's life. Both went to China primarily to lecture and to teach; but both confess that every day they stayed they thought less of what they had to teach the Chinese and more of what they had to learn from them. Since their return, John Dewey has been giving us his "impressions" in a number of most illuminating articles, and, quite recently, Bertrand Russell has published his book, "The Problem of China," which John Dewey, in a review published in *The Dial*, calls "the most enlightening, in information and comment, of all the many works which have been recently written to put Western readers in touch with the issues of the Far East."

The book gives a remarkably clear and condensed account of the historical forces and factors which have led up to the present situation in the Far East, together with a most discriminating analysis of present conditions, and is to be recommended to all who seek a better understanding of the situation in the Far East and the factors involved. But the book is much more than this. In Bertrand Russell's treatment, the Problem of China becomes the Problem of our Western civilization, and it is in this aspect of the book that I am especially interested this morning.

In the first chapter, Mr. Russell tells us that it was on a Volga river boat in the summer of 1920 that he first realized "how profound is the disease in our Western mentality, which the Bolsheviki are attempting to force upon an essentially Asiatic population, just as Japan and

the West are doing in China." He says, "Our boat traveled on, day after day, through an unknown and mysterious land. Our company were noisy, gay, quarrelsome, full of facile theories, with glib explanations of everything, persuaded that there is nothing they could not understand and no human destiny outside the purview of their system." Yet one of the company lay at death's door and "all around us lay a great silence, strong as death, unfathomable as the heavens. It seemed that none had the leisure to hear the silence, yet it called to me so insistently that I grew deaf to the harangues of propagandists and the information of the well-informed. \* \* \*

It was in this mood that I set out for China to seek a new hope."

After his return from China it seemed to him that the noisy, doctrinaire, self-assertive, cocksure, propagandizing set of passengers who had accompanied him on the Volga river boat were only a symbol of Western mentality going headlong to destruction. China, in contrast, is the brooding silence of nature, calm,—indolent, perhaps, but still tranquil in soul,—tolerant, possessed of an unbroken instinctive sympathy with nature, and power to draw consolation and happiness from simple things, content with death as with life because free from the corroding egotism of the West.

In setting forth the contrast, in general, as Bertrand Russell sees it, I want to quote a few passages taken at random from the book. "Our Western civilization is built upon assumptions which, to a psychologist, are rationalizings of excessive energy. Our industrialism, our militarism, our love of progress, our missionary zeal, our imperialism, our passion for dominating and organizing, all spring from a superflux of the itch for activity. The creed of efficiency for its own sake, without regard for the

ends to which it is directed, has become somewhat discredited in Europe since the war, which would never have taken place if the Western nations had been slightly more indolent. \* \* \* Through industrialism and the high pressure at which most of us live we have lost that instinctive happiness and joy of living which China has retained. \* \* \* Our prosperity can be obtained only by widespread oppression and exploitation of weaker nations, while the Chinese are not strong enough to injure other countries, and they secure whatever they enjoy by means of their own merits and exertions alone. \* \* \* By valuing progress and efficiency we have secured power and wealth; by ignoring them, the Chinese, until we brought disturbance, secured upon the whole a peaceable existence and a life full of enjoyment. \* \* \* The Chinese have discovered, and have practiced for many centuries, a way of life which, if it could be adopted by all the world, would make all the world happy. We Europeans have not. Our way of life demands strife, exploitation, restless change, discontent and destruction." And John Dewey adds, that America is Europe at its worst because it is Europe at its peak of energy, efficiency and proselytizing intolerance, plus a complacent and impenetrable self-righteousness which in Europe is beginning to crumble. America presents the acme of the mechanistic outlook, "something which exists equally in imperialism, Bolshevism and the Y. M. C. A. \* \* \* the habit of regarding mankind as raw material, to be moulded by our scientific manipulation into whatever form may happen to suit our fancy. \* \* \* the cultivation of will at the expense of perception. It is belief in government, in a life against nature, in the desirability of conversion to one's own point of view and creed that Chinese culture has escaped."

In comparing an alien culture with one's own, one is forced to ask himself some fundamental questions at the outset, in order to have before him a criterion by which to judge. These questions are rarely asked unless one is driven by some deep crisis to consider critically the whole matter of values. At such times one is forced to inquire: What are the things that I ultimately value? What would make me judge one society as more desirable than another? What sort of ends should I most wish to see realized in the world? And Mr. Russell reminds us that different people will answer these questions differently. His own answer to these questions is as follows: "The main things which seem to me important on their own account, and not merely as means to other things, are: knowledge, art, instinctive happiness, and relations of friendship and affection."

He explains further just what he means by these things of ultimate value. By knowledge, he does not mean all knowledge. There is much in the way of dry lists of facts that is merely useful and still more that has no appreciable value of any kind. The understanding of nature he holds to be good and delightful on its own account. Some biographies and parts of history he also deems valuable; and no doubt he would include knowledge of the best in literature. By art, he does not mean the deliberate production of trained artists, "though, of course, these at their best, deserve the highest place." But he has in mind the almost unconscious reaching after beauty which one finds among Russian peasants and Chinese coolies, "the sort of impulse that creates folk-songs, that existed among ourselves before the time of the Puritans, and survives in cottage gardens." All will agree that instinctive happiness or joy of life is one of the most important values of human existence, but he points out what



we all know, that it has well-nigh been lost through industrialism and the high pressure under which we live; "its commonness in China is a strong reason for thinking well of Chinese civilization."

There is another question to be considered in judging of a society; not only how much of good or evil there is within a particular society, but also what effects it has in promoting good or evil in other societies, and how far the good things it enjoys depends upon evils elsewhere. In this respect also he thinks China is better than we are. For most of the prosperity of Western civilization can only be obtained by wide-spread oppression and exploitation of weaker peoples, while whatever the Chinese enjoy is theirs by virtue of their exertions alone.

Let no one imagine that this question of the comparative merits of Eastern and Western civilizations is a purely academic question or an empty intellectual exercise. It lies at the basis of all international and inter-racial problems. It involves practical questions affecting directly every man's every-day existence. We formulate political policies, embark on definite, immediate enterprises, levy taxes on ourselves, engage in diplomatic negotiations, build larger armies and navies, and take steps leading inevitably to war,—all in strict obedience to our own particular views of the ultimate values of human life, that is, our philosophy as to what really constitutes civilization. Because of these views we are committed in our most vital relations as individuals and in our actions as states. Our individual well-being and our future as nations are profoundly affected. According to the philosophy underlying Western civilization, the policy of the great Powers toward China, India, Africa, Turkey, Mexico and all insular territories is in its every aspect, based on the premise that the whole world must become



mechanized and industrialized, and that the twentieth-century civilization of the Occident is the form of life to which every race must eventually adapt itself, regardless of what other values may be lost in the process.

We need to remember that our modern industrial civilization is only one hundred and fifty years old, and that up to that time the white race measured even by material standards, was backward, as one can discover by reading of the travels of the first European visitors to the East, notably Marco Polo, and the accounts of contemporary conditions in Europe. By comparison with the cities of China in such matters as roads, pavements, cleanliness, sanitation, imposing buildings, fine shops and business organization, European cities were rude and primitive. If we leave out what science has done for the West,—and on the material side of life its contribution has indeed been tremendous—all else, art, music, literature, laws, codifications of conduct, philosophies and religious systems,—in short, all the refinements of life are to be found in the cultural systems of these older civilizations; it might even be argued successfully that in these respects theirs is superior. In view of these facts, does it not seem presumptuous for us to assume, without more convincing evidence than lies upon the surface, that our new and very young civilization is the best and only form for all the world, and that all races and peoples must perforce conform their entire life, which antedates ours, remember, by many centuries, to our mechanized standards? Judged historically and measured by race-time, is it not modern civilization that is the abnormal and untested as yet? Should not the burden of proof rest upon it, rather than upon the older forms of cultural life? This at least is what our two Western philosophers suggest, on their return from their sojourn in the East.

In making the contrast between the older and newer forms of civilizations, Bertrand Russell traces Western civilization back to three ultimate sources: (1) Greek culture; (2) Jewish religion and ethics; (3) Modern industrialism, which is itself a direct outcome of modern science. From the Greeks we derive literature and the arts, philosophy and pure mathematics; also the more urbane portions of our social outlook. From the Jews we derive "fanatical belief, which its friends call 'faith'; moral fervor, with the conception of sin; religious intolerance, and some part of our nationalism." From science we derive power and the sense of power, "the belief that we are as gods, and may justly be the arbiters of life and death for all unscientific races." We derive also the empirical method, by which almost all real knowledge has been acquired. These three elements, Mr. Russell thinks, account for most of our mentality.

These influences, which have played such a\*predominating part in the formation of Western mentality, have in the last one hundred and fifty years, culminated in modern industrialism, to which everything else has been subordinated. Western civilization, so far as it is distinguished from other civilizations, is science. Steam, steel and electricity are its foundations, communications and quantity production its concrete manifestations, and rampant materialism is its spirit. The school, the press, the railroad, telegraph, telephone, wireless, the hospital, sewers and sanitation are by-products of industrialization. Granting that these are, or may become, genuine benefits in the enhancing of human values, we cannot forget the other by-products of industrialism: the inhuman pace of the factory and the type of city that grows up about the factory, standardization, regimentation and leveling to a

monotone of mediocrity, and especially, the greater destructiveness of instruments of war.

All that the Menckens, Sinclair Lewises and other American rebels of today say of our life is true. Their claim that life has been standardized, stratified, dulled and ironed out of every element of individuality "until a man has become one pea in a huge globular pod, differing from the other peas in curvature, form and external variations, but identical with them in flavor, taste and texture," contains altogether too much truth to be comfortable. Where this tribe of rebels is wrong is that they have leveled their indictment against the wrong offender; in fact, few of them have even recognized the offense. The America of today,—its monotony, tastelessness, vulgarity, superficiality, and mob dictatorship,—is not the product of a unique American race stock or race spirit. It is the direct product of the machine age. John Ruskin saw it coming, but his protest was like "a voice crying in the wilderness." Edward Carpenter describes the real situation in his book, "Civilization, Its Cause and Cure," and many others have correctly diagnosed the "disease."

America today is the England, France, Germany and Italy of fifty years from today. It is what it is fifty years before them because it did not have to overcome the arresting power of a long tradition and implanted social forms. Here mechanization could establish itself unresisted, and thus America is the product, the inevitable product of the machine age. You cannot have machinery without quantity production. You cannot have quantity production without standardization. You cannot have standardization of all the material adjuncts of life without standardization of thought, opinion, ideals, conduct and morals. It is industrialism, not the race stock or spirit, that has led directly to our Babbitts and Rotary Clubs.

I would not be unmindful of all the blessings and comforts that have come through industrialism and that have tended to elevate the material standards of life. Sanitation, public cleanliness, the combatting of disease by prevention and remedy, hospitals, control of epidemics, prevention of famine and flood,—all these could not exist without high technical skill and the complicated machinery of industrialism. But nevertheless it does make us pause and wonder when we reflect that the character of modern life has been shaped by sewers and drains, by bath tubs and automobiles, more than by schools and by churches.

The ancient city of Athens was filthy, without sewers and drains and bath rooms, and every city in America, large or small, goes far beyond Athens in all these material advantages. But to my knowledge there is no city in the United States or anywhere in this Western world that has yet produced a single *Æschylus* or *Sophocles* or *Euripides*, a single *Socrates* or *Plato* or *Aristotle*. Herein lies the real tragedy of modern civilization. In all these material advantages and comforts of life we have far surpassed, through science, the ancient peoples; but in the ultimate values of human life, in all that makes for the higher cultural life of human beings, the signs of genuine progress are not so apparent.

Western civilization has culminated in the ideals of speed, power and material wealth. To attain these ends we bend every effort, and for the sake of these, all other things must be subordinated. But does speed conserve necessarily any of the real values of life? Does one who has visited one hundred cities understand them a hundred times as well as one who has visited five? And has he assimilated more of truth and beauty who travels sixty miles an hour than one who travels six miles? Consider

the Sunday motorist or the American tourist. Or is there any value in power apart from the ends for which it is used? When the titanic powers which science has disclosed are being devoted to destructive purposes is it not time to ask the question whether mere power, in and of itself, is necessarily a value in life? The income tax reports reveal the fact that there has been a larger return this year than formerly, and the papers immediately conclude that the country is "more prosperous" than it has been. But does the fact that more people are making more money necessarily mean that the country is more prosperous? What does "prosperity" mean to us? Is it only a thing of material wealth, or is it not conceivable that a people might be more truly "prosperous," in the real values of life, when it was not making so much money? Must our highest standard be that of material wealth, as it undoubtedly is for most people today?

It is such searching questions that men like Bertrand Russell and John Dewey are asking,—questions that have to do, not so much with the external machinery of modern civilization, as with the philosophy that underlies it, the sort of values it serves, the ideals it follows, the ends to which it is devoted. It is not necessary to lay down dogmatic assertions on either side of the question of industrialism. It is necessary only to realize that there is a question with two sides. There are indeed grave menaces to our present civilization, but they do not lie where the flourishing school of peril-mongers imagine,—in Nordic strains so-called or fancied uprisings of the colored races, or inundation by some mythical class predestined at birth to be Bolshevik. The real menaces lie not outside but within civilization itself,—in its own philosophy of life and the ends for which it is striving. Externally, there is only as much of menace as may inhere in the fact that

the other peoples of the earth may question, as indeed they are questioning, the eternal rightness of our way of organizing life, and prefer their own way even to the extent of resisting the encroachments of ours.

In contrasting the cultural life of China with ours, Mr. Russell points out that no one of the three elements entering into our type of civilization has had any appreciable part in the development of China, unless it be the indirect influence of Greece on Chinese painting, sculpture and music. According to Mr. Russell, the two chief determining influences in China's development came through Lao-Tze and Confucius, who both belong to the sixth century B. C. Lao-Tze was a religious philosopher with a strong mystical tendency. Out of his teachings grew the scripture of religion known as Laoism. He held that every person, every animal and every thing has a certain way of behaving which is natural to him or her or it, and that we ought to conform to this way ourselves and encourage others to conform to it. "Lao" means "way," and is used in a more or less mystical sense, as in the words "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Lao-Tze's ideas were developed by his disciple, Chaung-Tze. The philosophy which both advocated was one of freedom. They thought ill of government, and of all interferences with nature. They complained of the hurry of modern life, which they contrasted with the calm existence of those whom they called "the pure men of old." Their mysticism was characterized by humor, restraint and understatement, all of which are revealed in the literature and art as well as in the lives of cultivated Chinese of the present day.

Laoism, although it survived in a degenerated form as magic, was entirely ousted from the favor of the educated classes by Confucianism. Confucianism, as devel-



oped by the followers of Confucius, is a system of pure ethics, without religious dogma of any kind; it has not given rise to a powerful priesthood, and it has never led to persecution. It has succeeded in ingraining in the character of the people the fundamental principles of morals, and has produced a whole nation possessed of exquisite manners and perfect courtesy. These things, according to Mr. Russell, are by no means confined to one class; they exist even in the humblest coolie. "It is humiliating to watch the brutal insolence of white men received by the Chinese with a quiet dignity which cannot demean itself to answer rudeness with rudeness. Europeans often regard this as a weakness, but it is really strength, the strength by which the Chinese have hitherto conquered all their conquerors."

The one and only important foreign element in the traditional civilization of the Chinese is Buddhism, which came into China from India in the early centuries of the Christian era. Buddhism is a religion as Confucianism is not. It has its mystic dogmas, its way of salvation and a future life. And in China a man may be both a Buddhist and a Confucian, as nothing in either is incompatible with the other. The result has been, however, that the more contemplative and religious natures turned to Buddhism while the active administrative type was content with Confucianism, which was always the official teaching in which candidates for the civil service were examined. Mr. Russell regards China as practically destitute of religion today, not only in the upper classes but throughout the population. There is a very definite ethical code, but it is not fierce or persecuting, and does not contain the notion of "sin." Except quite recently, through European influence, there has been no science and no industrialism.



But let us examine more in detail, with the aid of the insight of Mr. Russell, the character of the cultural life of China, which has developed out of these traditional sources. "The distinctive merit of our civilization," says Mr. Russell, "is the scientific method; the distinctive merit of the Chinese, a just conception of the true ends of life." It is just here that the fundamental contrast lies. Lao-Tze describes the operation of "Lao" as "production without possession, action without self-assertion, development without domination." From these words, Mr. Russell thinks we can derive a conception of the ends of life as thoughtful Chinese see them; and we are bound to admit that they are very different from the ends that most white men set before themselves. Possession, self-assertion, domination are the great things that are eagerly sought in the West both by nations and individuals. They have been erected into a philosophy by Nietzsche, and Nietzsche's disciples are by no means confined to Germany.

Bertrand Russell finds a definite superiority to ourselves, both in theory and practice, in the freedom of the Chinese from the tendency to self-assertion and domination. There is much less desire than among the white races to tyrannize over other people. The weakness of China internationally is quite as much due to this virtue as to the vices of political corruption, which are usually assigned as the sole reason. If any nation in the world could ever be "too proud to fight," that nation would be China. The Chinese are, as a rule, not good soldiers, because the causes for which they are asked to fight are not worth fighting for, and they know it. But this is only a proof of their essential reasonableness. The natural Chinese attitude toward other peoples is one of friendliness, showing courtesy and expecting it in return. If

the Chinese chose, with their four hundred million population, they could be the most powerful nation in the world. But they desire only freedom, not domination, which the Western powers are constantly seeking either in their political or economic imperialism, or both. It is not improbable, our author points out, that other nations may compel the Chinese to fight for their freedom, and if so, they may lose their natural virtue in this respect and acquire a taste for empire, as other nations have done before them. But at present, though they have been an imperial race for two thousand years, their love for empire is exceedingly slight.

While there have been many wars in China, Mr. Russell declares that the natural outlook of the Chinese is very pacifistic. In what other country could a poet have chosen, as Po-Chui did in one of his poems that has been translated by Mr. Waley, and called by him, "The Old Man With the Broken Arm," to make a hero of a recruit who maimed himself to escape military service? The pacifism of the Chinese is not due to the activities of Peace Societies, but is rooted in their contemplative outlook on life, and in the fact that they do not desire to change whatever they see or to subdue others to their way of life. They take an instinctive pleasure, as their literature and art reveal, in observing the characteristic manifestations of different kinds of life, and they seem to have no wish to reduce everything to a preconceived pattern.

The Chinese know nothing of the ideal of progress in the form in which it has come to dominate the Western nations in the last two or three centuries, and which affords a rationalization of our active impulses. Progress is a very modern ideal even with us; it is part of what

we owe to science and industrialism. The cultivated conservative Chinamen of the present day talk exactly as their earliest sages write. If the Westerner points out to them that this shows how little progress there has been in China, they will say: "Why seek progress when you already enjoy what is excellent?" At first thought, this point of view strikes the average Occidental as indolence, due to lack of ambition, but as one reflects upon it, doubts as to one's own wisdom gradually persist in intruding themselves, until at last, one begins to wonder how much of what we call "progress" is, after all, only restless change, bringing us no nearer to any desirable goal; and how much that is truly "excellent" we have lost in our insatiable thirst for new fields to conquer.

Mr. Russell traces an interesting contrast between what the Chinese have sought in the West and what the West has sought in China. "The Chinese in the West seek knowledge, in the hope,—which I fear is usually vain,—that the knowledge they find may prove a gateway to wisdom." It is this wisdom that lies beyond the facts, that consists in an interpretation of the facts,—that is, in a consistent philosophy of life,—that the thoughtful Chinese seem to be ever seeking, and that so few in the West know anything about. White men, on the other hand, have gone to China with three motives: to fight, to make money, and to convert the Chinese to their religion. "The last of these motives has the merit of being idealistic, and has inspired many heroic lives. But the soldier, the merchant and the missionary are alike concerned to stamp our civilization upon the whole world; they are all three, in a certain sense, pugnacious."

The Chinese are willing to learn from others, provided they are convinced that it is worth learning, but they have no wish to convert us to Confucianism or to their

ideals for life. They say, "religions are many, reason is one," and with that they are content to let us go our way. According to Mr. Russell, the tolerance of the Chinese is in excess of anything that Westerners can imagine from their experience at home. We imagine ourselves tolerant, only because we are a little more so than our intolerant ancestors. But we still practice political, social, religious and racial persecution, of which the Chinese would never be guilty, and still more, we are firmly persuaded that our civilization, our religion and our way of life are immeasurably better than any other; so that when we come across a nation like China or India we are convinced that the very kindest thing we can do to them is to make them just like ourselves.

Then there is the Chinese capacity for simple enjoyments and instinctive happiness. In the number of *things* we possess, we of the West are incomparably better off than the Chinese, but one may legitimately question whether these material advantages yield us a larger return of happiness; and if life does not yield us happiness what is it for? The Chinaman works hard and long, but his work is not deadening. He is a craftsman, not a mere tender of machines. He makes something in which he can express *himself*. He does not, as yet, spend his life turning one screw or lifting one lever a thousand times a day, the relation of which to the finished product he does not know or care to know. He has a personal relation to his work, his fellow-workers and the product. He chats as he works, takes a cup of tea, stops to regard the passing excitement in the street, or greet a friend or to reprimand his children, for his workshop is also his home. If he has not so much leisure measured in hours, he has more of leisureliness. He has not the harried, worried look seen on the faces in American cities. If he

can play at his work, as Americans cannot, he also does not work at his play as so many Americans do.

Last of all, there is the proverbial honesty of the Chinese. The Chinese are well known to be the most honest nation on the globe. The word of a Chinaman is, not "as good as his bond,"—it is his bond, and is accepted as such the whole world round. The big exporting houses in the Western world would rather do business with the Chinese than with any other people, because they are "so reliable and can be trusted."

These are some of the fundamental traits of Chinese character that find expression in their higher cultural life, as Bertrand Russell interprets them for us. To him, they grow out of a certain philosophy of life, a clear conception of the true ends of life. The average Chinaman, even if he is miserably poor, is happier than the average Englishman or American, because his life is based upon a more humane and truly civilized outlook than our own. "Restlessness and pugnacity not only cause obvious evils, but fill our lives with discontent, incapacitate us for the enjoyment of beauty, and make us practically incapable of the contemplative virtues. I do not deny that the Chinese go too far in the other direction; but for that very reason I think contact between East and West is likely to be fruitful to both parties. They may learn from us the indispensable minimum of practical efficiency, and we may learn from them something of that contemplative wisdom which has enabled them to persist while all the other nations of antiquity have perished."

If one is disposed to think that Mr. Russell has idealized the civilization of China, slighted its defects and exaggerated its excellencies, Mr. Dewey admits that discriminating Chinese would be the first to make this criticism. But Mr. Dewey continues, after a three-year resi-

dence in China: "I do not regard this fact, however, as a serious defect. For my own experience in China convinces me that Mr. Russell has *justly* stated the *direction* in which Chinese excellence exists. \* \* \* And I do not find it in me to differ from Mr. Russell as to the extent and urgency of the need in the West to pause and learn from the Orient."

In spite of the startling fact that these two foremost philosophers of the Western world are thus bidding us pause and learn from the Orient, I do not have great hopes that the present leaders of Western civilization will heed their injunction. Their eyes are blinded by the false gods of speed and power and wealth, and to them, our way of life is the only way for all the world.

But to all thoughtful minds, and their number is steadily increasing, I would earnestly commend this book of Bertrand Russell's. The Problem of China is, for China, the problem as to whether she can retain the best in her own cultural life while she accepts the best that the West has to offer, or whether she will lose her former conception of the just ends of life and become like the West in its restless search for wealth and its love of domination. The fate of China hangs indeed in the balance as we await the result of the contact of her ancient civilization with the newer forces from the West.

But the problem for Occidental civilization is the still more serious one, as to whether we have gone too far to pause and think whither we are tending. The question of comparative civilizations is, from this viewpoint, the burning problem of our age. We must begin to face it with more of honesty and less of ignorance. We have taken for granted far too complacently the superiority of our own civilization over all others, and have acted too confidently on that assumption. Our actions have caused



great wars, and, if continued, they will cause still more deadly wars in the future. Our civilization, as it stands, has subordinated all human values to material values ; we magnify things, but we minimize human personalities. Surely we must all agree that the only civilization worthy the name, or worthy to continue, is the civilization that tends primarily toward the enrichment and enlargement of the human personality.

It is not so much a question of the external machinery of civilization as it is of the philosophy that underlies our civilization. It is here that the changes must begin if they are ever to find expression in the outward reorganization of society. Fundamentally, it is a question of what we deem to be the ultimate values of life. This is the problem to which Bertrand Russell and John Dewey would turn our attention. For the sake of the future of the white race, and of all races, the great powers particularly must cultivate a little more intellectual and spiritual humility. They must be willing to learn from others. They must realize that our Western civilization is itself somewhat parvenu and a little callow, and that conditions in the world today demand a thorough and sincere re-examination of the very bases upon which it rests. Out of such a realization might come a better world in which civilization was made to serve humanity as now it limits and destroys it.





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